



*Dedicated to  
Satisfying our Community's  
Water Needs*

**AGENDA  
MESA WATER DISTRICT  
SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 1:30 p.m.  
Upstairs Conference Room**

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Committee Members: Marice H. DePasquale, President  
Shawn Dewane, Vice President  
Paul E. Shoenberger, P.E., General Manager  
Denise Khalifa, Chief Administrative Officer

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Items Not on the Agenda:** Members of the public are invited to address the Board regarding items which are not appearing on the posted agenda. Each speaker shall be limited to three minutes. The Executive Committee will set aside 30 minutes for public comments for items not appearing on the posted agenda.

**Items on the Agenda:** Members of the public shall be permitted to comment on agenda items before action is taken, or after the Executive Committee has discussed the item. Each speaker shall be limited to three minutes. The Executive Committee will set aside 60 minutes for public comments for items appearing on the posted agenda.

**PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

*Items recommended for approval at this meeting may be agendized for approval at a future Board meeting.*

1. General Legal Counsel Services
2. Board Workshop Planning

**ACTION ITEMS:**

None

**REPORTS:**

3. Future Agenda Topics
4. Report of the General Manager
5. Directors' Reports and Comments



*In compliance with California law and the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need disability-related modifications or accommodations, including auxiliary aids or services in order to participate in the meeting, or if you need the agenda provided in an alternative format, please call the District Secretary at (949) 631-1205. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable Mesa Water District (Mesa Water®) to make reasonable arrangements to accommodate your requests.*

*Members of the public desiring to make verbal comments using a translator to present their comments into English shall be provided reasonable time accommodations that are consistent with California law.*

*Agenda materials that are public records, which have been distributed to a majority of the Mesa Water Board of Directors (Board), will be available for public inspection at the District Boardroom, 1965 Placentia Avenue, Costa Mesa, CA and on Mesa Water's website at **www.MesaWater.org**. If materials are distributed to the Board less than 72 hours prior or during the meeting, the materials will be available at the time of the meeting.*

## **ADJOURNMENT**



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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Executive Committee  
FROM: Paul E. Shoenberger, P.E., General Manager  
DATE: March 10, 2026  
SUBJECT: General Legal Counsel Services

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### RECOMMENDATION

This item is provided for discussion.

### STRATEGIC PLAN

- Goal #1: Provide an abundant, local, reliable and safe water supply.
- Goal #2: Perpetually renew and improve our infrastructure.
- Goal #3: Be financially responsible and transparent.
- Goal #4: Increase public awareness of Mesa Water.
- Goal #5: Attract, develop and retain skilled employees.
- Goal #6: Provide excellent customer service.
- Goal #7: Actively participate in regional and statewide water issues.
- Goal #8: Practice continual business improvement.

### PRIOR BOARD ACTION/DISCUSSION

At its October 21, 2016 meeting, after an extensive selection process, the Board of Directors (Board) retained the firm of Bowie, Arneson, Wiles & Giannone as Mesa Water District's (Mesa Water®) General Legal Counsel, and authorized the General Manager to sign a five-year contract, which included key staff provisions for the firm to follow.

At its February 11, 2021 meeting, the Board received information that staff was preparing a Request for Proposals for General Legal Counsel Services.

At its April 27, 2021 Committee meeting, the Board directed staff to move forward with conducting in-person interviews for General Legal Counsel Services.

At its May 25, 2021 Committee meeting, the Board directed staff to schedule interviews with the three highest ranked firms (listed here in alphabetical order): Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud & Romo; Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP; and Rutan & Tucker, LLP.

At its July 6, 2021 meeting, the Board conducted interviews with three firms and retained the firm of Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud & Romo (AALRR) as Mesa Water's General Legal Counsel.

At its September 8, 2021 meeting, after an extensive selection process, the Board approved a five-year contract with AALRR to provide General Legal Counsel Services to Mesa Water.

At its February 11, 2026 meeting, the Board received information that staff was preparing a Request for Proposals for General Legal Counsel Services. The Board directed staff to bring the topic to a future meeting for discussion.



## BACKGROUND

First included in the 2013 Strategic Plan, one of the five components of Goal #3, Objective D stated, "Prohibit evergreen contracts." Upon further discussion at its March 21, 2015 workshop, the Board delved more deeply into the review of Mesa Water's support services' contracts. The Board directed staff to administer a competitive selection process for services that had not been competitively selected up to that time, including: Legal Services, Water Industry Advocates, Electrical Maintenance/Repair and Electrical Maintenance.

In 2017, the Board directed staff to prepare a resolution establishing and documenting the selection processes for General Legal Counsel and Independent Auditor to further solidify the best practice of prohibiting evergreen contracts. On June 8, 2017, the Board adopted Resolution No. 1501 Establishing a Policy for the Selection Process for the Appointment of General Legal Counsel and Independent Auditor.

In 2021, the Board approved a five-year contract with AALRR to provide Mesa Water's General Legal Counsel Services through October 31, 2026. As written, the contract has two 1-year extensions available that the Board could consider approving, if desired.

## DISCUSSION

Mesa Water uses a robust business model that focuses on managing the District's core processes with internal staff while using supplemental support services for activities that are not performed on a routine basis or that require expertise that internal staff cannot provide. General Legal Counsel is one such example.

Since January 1, 2018, AALRR has represented Mesa Water as General Legal Counsel; their primary role is to independently represent the District while providing expert legal advice to the Board, General Manager and other designated staff.

AALRR's contract is set to expire on October 31, 2026. Staff is beginning to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) to competitively select a vendor for General Legal Counsel Services following the procurement process below:

- Upon receipt of proposals, staff will review and provide the Board with rankings;
- The Board will provide direction to staff on which firms will be interviewed; and
- The Board will conduct interviews and make a final selection.

The selected law firm will be expected to provide a broad range of general legal services, including but not limited to Brown Act compliance, ethics, environmental law, eminent domain, contract law, public works contracts, bidding and construction law, special district operations, legislative and regulatory advocacy, recycled and desalinated water regulation and permitting, operations and procedure of Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), regulation of groundwater (and associated pumping charges), and general litigation. An operational knowledge of the roles and functions of the following organizations is essential to performing the role as General Legal Counsel to the District: Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), California



Department of Water Resources (DWR), State Water Project (SWP), Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC), Orange County Water District (OCWD), State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and the SWRCB Drinking Water Division.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

None.

ATTACHMENTS

None.



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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Executive Committee  
FROM: Paul E. Shoenberger, P.E., General Manager  
DATE: March 10, 2026  
SUBJECT: Board Workshop Planning

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### RECOMMENDATION

Recommend that the Board of Directors review agenda topics and discuss planning for the April 29, 2026 Board of Directors' workshop.

### STRATEGIC PLAN

- Goal #1: Provide an abundant, local, reliable and safe water supply.
- Goal #2: Perpetually renew and improve our infrastructure.
- Goal #3: Be financially responsible and transparent.
- Goal #4: Increase public awareness of Mesa Water.
- Goal #5: Attract, develop and retain skilled employees.
- Goal #6: Provide excellent customer service.
- Goal #7: Actively participate in regional and statewide water issues.
- Goal #8: Practice continual business improvement.

### PRIOR BOARD ACTION/DISCUSSION

None.

### DISCUSSION

For the Board of Directors' review, the proposed agenda topics are as follows:

- Mesa Water District Projects Update & Status
- Fiscal Year 2027 Strategic Plan
- Financial Goals & Reserves/Designated Funds
- Financial Investments/AAA Rating
- Fiscal Year 2027 Staffing Plan
- Annual Performance Evaluation of the General Manager

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

In Fiscal Year 2026, \$1,000 is budgeted for Board workshop expenses; no funds have been spent to date.

### ATTACHMENTS

None.



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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Executive Committee  
FROM: Paul E. Shoenberger, P.E., General Manager  
DATE: March 10, 2026  
SUBJECT: Future Agenda Topics

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### RECOMMENDATION

Review future agenda topics.

### STRATEGIC PLAN

- Goal #1: Provide an abundant, local, reliable and safe water supply.
- Goal #2: Perpetually renew and improve our infrastructure.
- Goal #3: Be financially responsible and transparent.
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### PRIOR BOARD ACTION/DISCUSSION

None.

### DISCUSSION

Staff will provide a list of future agenda topics at the Executive Committee meeting.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

None.

### ATTACHMENTS

None.

**REPORTS:**

4. REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

**REPORTS:**

5. DIRECTORS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS